Use of Kulhars

*274. SHRI SHAHID SIDDIQUI:
SHRI R. SHUNMUGASUNDARAM:

Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) the cost per "Kulhar" being used in the Railways and the number of "Khulhars" required per day alongwith the amount spent so far;

(b) whether there are reports that these "Kulhars" are not environment friendly and will ultimately damage the soil;

(c) whether there is a saving in expenditure after the introduction of kulhars in place of plastic cups; and

(d) whether the use of paper-cups would be more cost-effective and eco-friendly in comparison to Kulhars being used?

THE MINISTER OF RAILWAYS (SHRI LALU PRASAD): (a) The cost of Kulhars being used varies from region to region. At present the unit cost of Kulhars being procured by departmental catering units on Indian Railways ranges from 20 paise to 1.10 Rupees. Procurement of Kulhars by departmental catering units as well as licensee operated catering units is based on the passenger demand. The requirement of Kulhars per day is need based and the collection of this data is dynamic and voluminous. Hence, the total requirement of Kulhars per day and the total amount spent thereon can not be ascertained exactly.

(b) There are no official reports that Kulhars are not environment friendly and will ultimately damage the soil.

(c) and (d) As an environment friendly measure, railways are discouraging the use of plastics. The cost of Kulhars and paper cups varies from region to region. Both paper-cups and Kulhars are eco-friendly. However, introduction of Kulhars will improve employment in the rural sector.

Expansion of V.S.P.

*275. DR. T. SUBBARAMI REDDY:
SHRI MANOJ BHATTACHARYA:

Will the Minister of STEEL be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Vizag Steel Plant (VSP) is currently in the red and if so, its cumulative losses as on 1st April, 2004;